

Sant Tukarama's Dehu Dhama and Pune Yatra



Sant Tukarama

Sant Tukarama (AD 1609-1650) was a saint-poet of towering stature. Tukarama was among the most prominent saints to have come out of the holy land of Maharashtra. He hailed from the village of Dehu, near Pune, and was born in the Warkari community who are devotees of Lord Vitthala (or Panduranga). Srila Prabhupada occasionally referred to this great saint, "The great saint of Maharashtra known as Saint Tukarama was also initiated by the Lord Caitanya. Saint Tukarama, after initiation by the Lord, over-flooded the whole of the Maharashtra Province with the sankirtana movement and the transcendental flow is still rolling on in the southwestern part of the great Indian peninsula." (Srimad-Bhagavatam - Introduction)

Tukarama pioneered the sankirtana movement in Maharashtra, constantly chanting the Holy Names to the accompaniment of his veena and hand cymbals. His dealings with his worshipable Lord Vitthala were extremely intimate and loving, and consequently, he was a staunch opponent of the Mayavada school. Several parallels may be drawn between his life and the lives of many of our Gaudiya Vaishnava acaryas, notably Srila Haridasa Thakura. Being completely immersed in the chanting of the Holy Names, he was the very embodiment of "trinad api sunichena, taror api sahishnuna, amanina manadena, kirtaniyah sada harih", and displayed extraordinary humility when confronted with the taunts and insults heaped upon him by the smarta (Caste) brahmanas.

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada mentions, "It is said that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu initiated Tukarama when He visited Pandharpur, and thus Tukarama became His disciple. Tukarama Acarya became very famous in the Maharashtra province, and he spread the sankirtana movement all over the province. The sankirtana party belonging to Tukarama is still very popular in Bombay and throughout the province of Maharashtra. Tukarama's

book is known as Abhanga. His sankirtana party exactly resembles the Gaudiya-Vaisnava sankirtana parties, for they chant the holy name of the Lord with mrdanga and karatalas." (Sri Caitanya-Caritamṛta, Madhya-līla, 9.282 purport)

Sant Tukarama was akin to Vedavani, and his teachings - known as "abhangas" or poetic slokas - would flow from his lips incessantly. In all, he compiled over 4000 abhangas, and these are still household verses throughout Maharashtra. The envious smartas ordered him to immerse his treasure of abhangas into the river Indrayani as he was born in a Vaishya family. He regularly went on sankirtana pilgrimage from Dehu to Pandharpur, along with thousands of his followers. Along the way he would stop and enlighten the crowds, which would increase from village to village. Always crying out to the Lord with his loving abhangas, Tukarama used his bhakti poetry to encourage everyone to take up a Krishna Conscious centred life. Tukarama's public discourses focused on offering one's daily life as service to the Lord. Tukarama worked for the enlightenment of society and emphasized sankirtana, chanting the Lord's holy names, rather than ritualistic observances or the mechanical study of the Vedas. Singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments, Saint Tukarama and the crowds he drew would happily walk over two hundred kilometres to Pandharpur.

He gloriously departed this material world at the young age of 41 years. His departure was glorious because it was on a Vaikuntha airplane, witnessed by thousands of followers. During the night before he left this world, he prepared for his departure by chanting the holy names non-stop. He extended an invitation to his family, friends, and followers who had gathered there: "I am going to Vaikuntha. Come along with me." After Tukarama announced his imminent departure, Sri Garuda landed on the bank of the Indrayani to carry him to the spiritual world. No one understood Tukarama's invitation. Everyone came forward and paid their final respects to Sri Tukarama. He then cast a look at his second wife, Jijabai, and said to all, "Bid farewell to me now and return home. It's high time I responded to Vithoba's call in Vaikuntha. Vithoba has been waiting for quite some time now. It's time for me to leave, and I beseech all for their blessings. Vithoba has come through for me at the end, and Tuka will now disappear." Sri Tukarama peacefully proceeded to board Garuda. The huge celestial bird flew to the spiritual sky, leaving behind a scene of hundreds of weeping and grieving devotees. He left this material world in his self-same body, singing the holy names of the Lord, just as Dhruva Maharaja had done in a previous age.

His followers say that his devotional accomplishments are so colossal that to describe them, many future generations of translators and commentators will have their pens occupied for centuries to come.

Words are the only jewels I possess

Words are the only clothes I wear

Words are the only food that sustains my life

Words are the only wealth I distribute among people Says Tuka, witness the Word, He is God

I worship Him with my words. - Sri Tukarama

Pune: By mercy of Srila Prabhupada, Vaishnavas and Lord Krishna, Pune is blessed with rich Krishna Conscious culture. There are following ISKCON Temples in and around Pune:

1. Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (New Vedic Cultural Centre)
2. Sri Sri Radha Kunjabihari Temple, Pune Camp
3. Sri Govind Dhama, Ravet (near Akurdi)
4. Sri Vaikuntha Angan, Dehu

Dehu is 1 hour drive from Pune. Local bus and auto rickshaw are available from Pune to go to Dehu. From Pune railway station there is hourly Pune-Lonavala local train. This train has Dehu Road station stop. One can get down at this station and catch an auto-rickshaw to Dehu Gaon which will take approx. 20 mins.

SANT TUKARAMA

Tukarama was appeared in 1609 A.D. at a village called Dehu in Pune district. It is about 7 miles from Alandi - the place honored by the Samadhi of Jnaneshwar, and about 3 miles from the railway station of Dehu Road on the railway line between Mumbai to Pune. Tukarama came from *Vaishya* family belonging to the tradesman class called Moray. The family had established itself at Dehu for a long time. They had accepted Vithoba of Pandharpur for worship and they had also constructed a temple of their own dedicated to Vithoba. The family members, since many generations, had also accepted the '*Wari*' of Pandharpur, i.e., the annual pilgrimages to Pandharpur on the 11th day of the month of Ashadh (June-July) and again on the 11th day of the month of Kartik (Oct-Nov). The childhood of Tukarama was almost uneventful. As a consequence of the many misfortunes, Tukarama was so much disgusted with life that he left his house and village and disappeared into the Bhamnath forest nearby. For 15 days he stayed there concentrating on the Almighty without food, water or sleep. After the 15th day, he realized his Supreme self and Vithoba visited him in His true form.

Tukarama now began to spend his life more and more in devotional practices, study of the poems and works of Jnanadev, Namdev and Ekanath, Gita, Bhagavata, etc., with the result that slowly, but unconsciously, he began to make poems. Then one day, he had a dream in which Namdev appeared with Panduranga, woke him and advised him to make devotional songs. They would not hear of any excuses. Panduranga gave him the necessary inspiration and Namdev told him to complete the 100 crores of poems which he had intended to make and of which he had completed 94 crores and 40 lakhs, leaving a balance of 5 crores and 60 lakhs for Tukarama. *The divine art of making poems came naturally to Tukarama and as they were of the nature of Bhakti, the people began to be more and more attracted to Tukarama - more so as he did not seek anything materially for himself or for his own worldly welfare.*

Whenever Tukarama began to perform bhajan or Kirtan, people began to flock to the place, and with very few exceptions, people of all classes began to consider him as a saint and treat him with respect. This was of course resented by a small number of people and they tried their best to discredit him; and having failed in this, they sent a report against Tukarama to Rameshwar Shastri who was regarded as a learned Brahmin of the time.

Tukarama tried to convince the Shastri that he was a very innocent person. But Rameshwar was adamant and would not listen to any argument. He told Tukarama finally that he saw, in the poems of Tukarama, a deliberate attempt to explain the principles of the *Srutis* which Tukarama, as a *Vaishya* by caste, had no right to do; he must therefore stop making poems of that sort in future, and as for the poems he had already made, they should be drowned in the Indrayani river.

Tukarama held all Brahmins in great reverence, and therefore, he immediately brought out of his home all the poems, bound them together, tied a big stone round the bundle, and threw it into the river. Tukarama's traducers, who were jealous of him, were greatly pleased. Tukarama did not mind their taunts, but he was worried. Here he was, merely singing the praise of Lord in his poems, and that was not the monopoly only of the Vedas and the *Srutis*. Moreover, he had been commanded by Panduranga Himself to spread Bhakti among the people through the poems.

Tukarama then sat on the bank of the river Indrayani in constant prayer to Panduranga to show him the correct path. For 13 days he thus sat unmoved, without water, food or sleep. On the last day, one of Tukarama's followers, in a dream, saw Panduranga coming to him and telling him, *"Go to the river; there you will find the poems of Tukarama floating on the surface intact"*. At once the man went to the river and brought to the bank the bundle of poems. Tukarama was moved by the mercy of Lord and delivered 5 poems blaming himself for doubting the word of Lord and for putting Him to so much trouble of having to preserve the poems in water for 13 days. This, however, was not sufficient for Tukarama who always held the word of a Brahmin as worthy of respect as that of the Holy Scriptures and he had the orders of Rameshwar Shastri not to make poems any more.

Soon after this event, Rameshwar one day passed through the village of Vagholi and came to a village where a Muslim Fakir by name Anagadshah was staying. In Anagadshah's compound, there was a big fountain throwing cool water all round. Rameashwar, seeing that fountain, was tempted to take a bath in the waters. Anagadshah was annoyed to see a stranger trespassing into his compound and cursed him that all his body should feel a burning sensation inwardly. Immediately Rameshwar began to suffer from the effects of the curse. All his efforts to make his body cool failed, and in despair, unable to bear the pangs, he went to Alandi and sat before the *Samadhi* of Jnaneshwar and prayed to him to relieve him of the burning sensation in his body. At night he saw Jnaneshwar in a dream. Jnaneshwar addressed him: *"You entertain hatred in your mind towards Tukarama, who is the greatest devotee of Vithoba. Go and surrender to Tukarama; all your bodily pains will vanish"*. Rameshwar, however, was afraid to go in-person to Tukarama. He knew by that time all that had taken place at Dehu and he had come to recognize the greatness of Tukarama and therefore was afraid that Tukarama might curse him. So he sent a letter to Tukarama apologizing and asking for forgiveness. Tukarama had nothing but supreme love towards everybody, towards even his persecutors. On receiving the letter, he sent a reply to Rameshwar in the following verse:

"If the mind is pure, even your enemies become your friends; you have no danger from cruel animals like tigers or serpents. Even poison becomes as beneficial to you as the nectar of heaven. All unhappiness will be converted into happiness and even suffering due to the burning of the body will vanish. You will come to love all creatures as you love yourself; you will entertain equal towards all. Tuka says, 'Narayan has showered His mercy on me. That is why I feel like this towards all beings.'"

As Rameshwar read the reply and came to the words, *"and even suffering due to the burning of the body will vanish"*, his body became free of all suffering and thus it was firmly impressed on him that he had done great injustice to Tukarama. From that time Rameshwar became a great admirer and an ardent follower of Tukarama.

By this incident, Tukarama's name and fame spread far and wide; but he himself remained poor. He was always doing bhajan and kirtan and he earned nothing. The burden of maintaining the family consisting of himself, wife and children fell on his poor wife. Tukarama was so absorbed in his *Bhajan* that generally he forgot about his dinner. His wife had to take his food, search for him and serve him wherever he was to be found. Mostly he was found on the Bhandara hill. Tukarama's wife had to undergo many difficulties in maintaining the family; but she was a good though she was apt to lose her temper sometimes.

Great Maratha King Shivaji was a great admirer of Tukarama and sent him a large number of costly presents and also invited him to his court. Tukarama refused both the presents and the invitation, saying that he had nothing to do with earthly kings. Then Shivaji himself came to Tukarama and stayed with him for several days and pressed him to accept some presents which Tukarama steadily refused. One day, Shivaji was so much impressed

and moved by the praises, songs and bhajan of Tukarama that he, for the moment, wanted to give up his kingdom and take to Bhajan and follow Tukarama. But Tukarama dissuaded him from doing so. He reminded Shivaji of his duty to his subjects and to Dharma and finally advised him thus: *"In order to realize Lord, it is not necessary to give up food or water and go to a forest. If the worldly pleasures come to you of themselves, enjoy them by all means, but only in the name of God who dwells in all of us. Do not desire anything and do not give up anything. This is my simple and only advice to you"*. Shivaji returned to his court a happier and a more contented man.

Tukarama prayed to the Lord that he might be taken away soon to His lotus feet where he could remain worshipping Him continuously forever and anon. When Tukarama's end was near, he told his friends that he would be going away in a few days. The night before his departure, Tukarama performed a Kirtan which was memorable in many respects. The subject was Harikatha. Tukarama said, *"Hari-katha is like the union of three holy rivers - Lord, the devotee and His Name. By listening to it, all one's sins are burnt off and one is purified. Even the pebbles lying around become holy and fit to be worshipped. Those among you who wish to be fit for transcendental abode should take the holy Prasad. This is the easiest way to attain to lotus feet of Lord Vitthala. Though you all bear the responsibilities or family life, never forget Pandurang never forget to worship Him and sing his praises. Pandharpur is very near you. It is the Vaikuntha on this earth. Go and worship the Lord there. It is my experience that the Name of the Lord alone will save you at the time of death. All of you have protected and maintained me in your midst for such a long time. I can never repay you and I am very grateful to you. I shall ever pray to Vithoba to bless you all and take you all to Vaikuntha after this life. This is my goodbye to you all and this is my advice to you. I prostrate before you and beseech you with tears never to forget the Name of the Lord. Always do Kirtan and Bhajan of Lord Narayana. Do not be anxious about your material welfare. The lord will look to it. This is all ephemeral. The Lord's Name is eternal. Depend on it only. This is my last request and advice"*.

Thus passed away one of the great saints with Lord's Name on his lips, singing praises of Him. Tukarama left this world in the year 1649 when he was 41 years old.



Main entrance gate (Dwar) at Dehu village



Birthplace of Sant Tukarama. This place is walking-distance from Sri Vitthala Rukmini main temple at Dehu.



Birthplace of Sant Tukarama



Vithoba Deity worshipped by Sant Tukarama's parents at his birthplace



Main Entrance to Sri Vitthala Rukmini Temple at Dehu



Sri Vitthala Rukmini Temple



Sri Vitthala Rukmini, beloved deities of Tukarama



Sri Vitthala Rukmini



Transcendentalists at Sri Vitthala Rukmini Temple



Lotus Feet of Sri Vitthala Rukmini



Sant Tukarama



Devotees chanting Sant Tukarama Abhangas at Sri Vitthala Rukmini Temple



Devotees performing sankirtana at Sri Vitthala Rukmini Temple



Sacred Palanquin of Sant Tukarama that goes every year from Dehu to Pandharpur during the month of Ashadh (June-July) amidst tumultuous Harinam Sankirtana travelling through various important towns and cities of western Maharashtra.



Hand-written Abhangas by Sant Tukarama



Great Maratha King Shivaji meeting Sant Tukarama



Sri Vitthala Rukmini's Maha Prasadam



Holy Indrayani River



Bhandara Dongar Hill where Sant Tukarama performed his daily bhajan



Way to Bhandara Dongar Hill where Sant Tukarama performed his daily bhajan



Temple at the exact spot on Bhandara Dongar Hill where Sant Tukaram performed his daily bhajan



Sant Tukaram and Sri Vitthala Rukmini



Sri Vitthala Rukmini



Beautiful views from Bhandara Dongar Hill



Vaikuntha Gamana Sthana – The Holy Place wherefrom Tukarama ascends to Vaikuntha



Vaikuntha Gamana Sthana



Vaikuntha Gamana Sthana



Holy Banyan Tree at Vaikuntha Gamana Sthana that witnessed this pastime



Magnificent Gatha Mandir on the banks of holy Indrayani River dedicated to Sant Tukarama

तुकाराम तुकाराम । नाम घेतां कांपे यम ॥ १॥
धन्य तुकोबा समर्थ । जेणें केला पुरुषार्थ ॥ २॥
जळीं दगडासहित वहा । तारिल्या जैशा लाह्या ॥ ३॥
म्हणे रामेश्वर भट्ट द्विजा । तुका विष्णु नाहीं दुजा ॥ ४॥



Sant Tukarama



Beautiful paintings displaying the pastimes of Lord at Gatha Mandir



Sant Tukarama



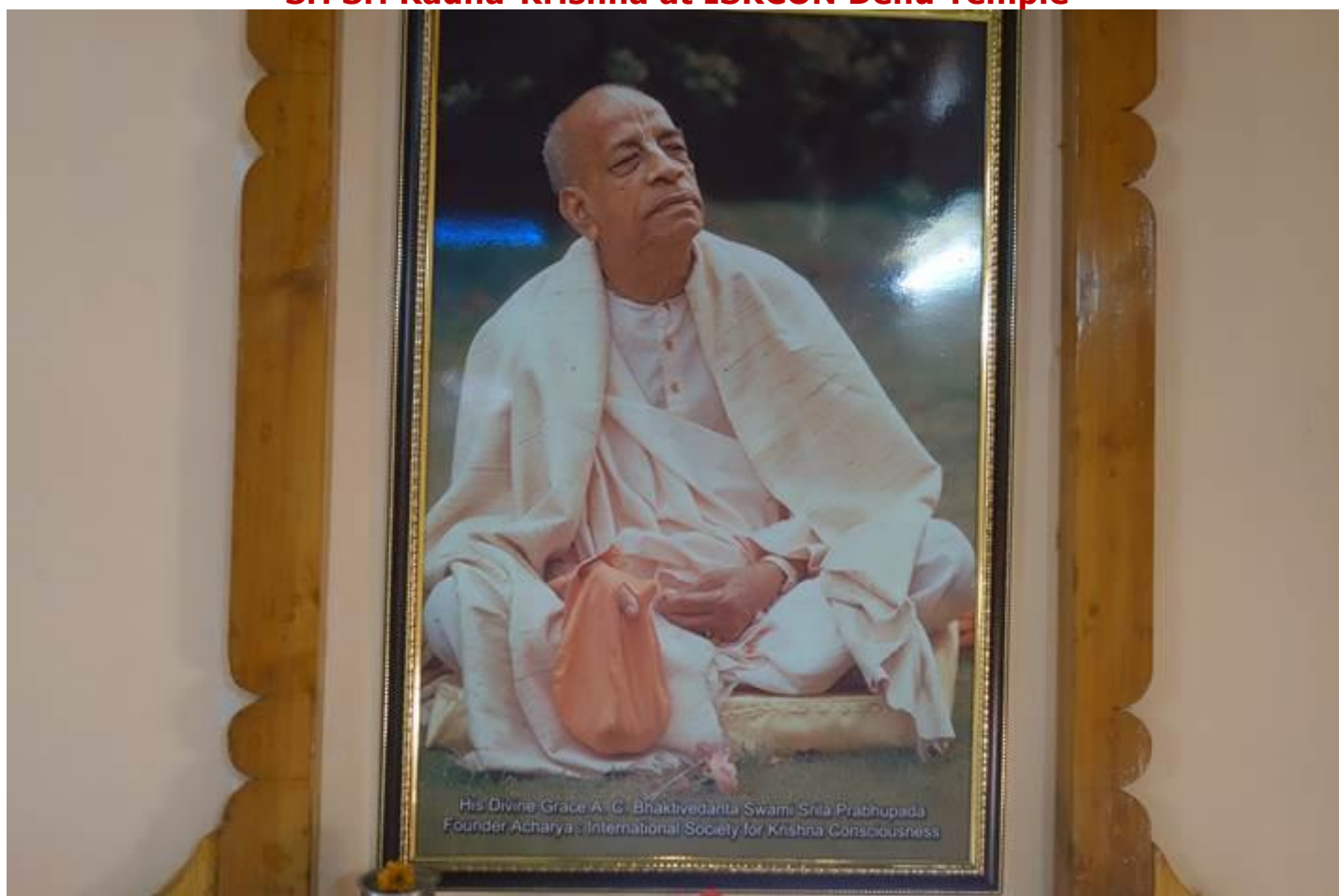
Annual Warkari (Harinam procession) passes through various towns and villages of western Maharashtra during the month of Ashadh (June-July)



Vaikuntha Angan - ISKCON Dehu Temple



Sri Sri Radha-Krishna at ISKCON Dehu Temple



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Books are the Basis, Purity is the Force, Preaching is the Essence and Utility is the Principle.



Beautiful nursery at ISKCON Dehu

ISKCON Akurdi Temple, Ravet

Address: Sr. No 189/3A,B, Sector No.29, Near Akurdi Railway Station, Bhaktivedant Swami Marg, Ravet, Ganesh Nagar, Ravet, Pune, Maharashtra 412101.



Sri Govind Dhama Temple, Ravet



Sri Govind Dhama Temple



Sri Govind Dharma Temple



Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Govind



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Sri Govind Dharma Temple



Govinda's restaurant at Sri Govind Dhama

Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (NVCC)

The story of ISKCON NVCC dates back to almost 1995, when late Mr. Banerjee met HH Gopal Krishna Goswami and expressed his inspiration in seeing the worship of Sri Sri Radha Kunjabihari. He offered his Balaji deity along with his house as gift to Maharaj and requested that Balaji be taken nice care by ISKCON. The money from the sale of house, 1.25 Cr became the seed money for purchasing the NVCC land of 6 acres. Though we were hesitant to embark on a huge temple project, the spiritual guidance from HH Radhanath Swami on building vibrant communities full of satisfied devotees offered a clear direction. and the encouragement, supervision, and continued guidance of HH Gopal Krishna Goswami, at every step of the growth of the project, was the motivating factor for the team.

Pune camp temple has been a spiritually thriving centre, spearheaded by IITian Radheshyam Das as the President, attracting youths, congregation and children who whole-heartedly took up to spirituality as their main goal of life, besides fulfilling their duties to job and home. As the vibrant community started swelling beyond limit, a need was felt to go for a bigger facility for organizing festivals, conducting seminars, and training programs, and expanding the mission. A new team of brahmacharis and congregation, headed by HG Sri Gurucharan Prabhu emerged with varieties of ideas for inspiring Puneites to liberally contribute for the holy cause of making a home for the Supreme Lord. The vast congregation of Pune, surcharged with the divine sentiment of building an NVCC pooled up their best efforts turning the dream into reality. This NVCC project is an educational, cultural and spiritual landmark of Pune, for catering to the holistic training of visitors from all walks of life and to revive their innate values culminating in love for the Supreme Lord and all living beings.

Features of NVCC: Daily classes on Srimad-Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-Gita for all; Traditional Balaji Temple built as a replica of the famous Tirupati temple; Beautiful

meditation hall that can accommodate 2000 people at one time; Large prasadam hall where close to 3000 people can sit down for Krishna Prasad; Bhaktivedanta Cultural Hall for hosting functions and special occasions; Govinda's Restaurant and Guest House facility where you can enjoy a comfortable stay within the serene environs of the temple.



Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (NVCC), Pune



Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (NVCC), Pune



Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (NVCC), Pune



Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (NVCC), Pune



Sri Sri Gaura Nitai



Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra



Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Transcendentalists giving Srimad-Bhagavatam class



Sri Sri Radha Vrindavana Candra Temple (NVCC), Pune



Lord Venkateswara Balaji Temple at NVCC, Pune



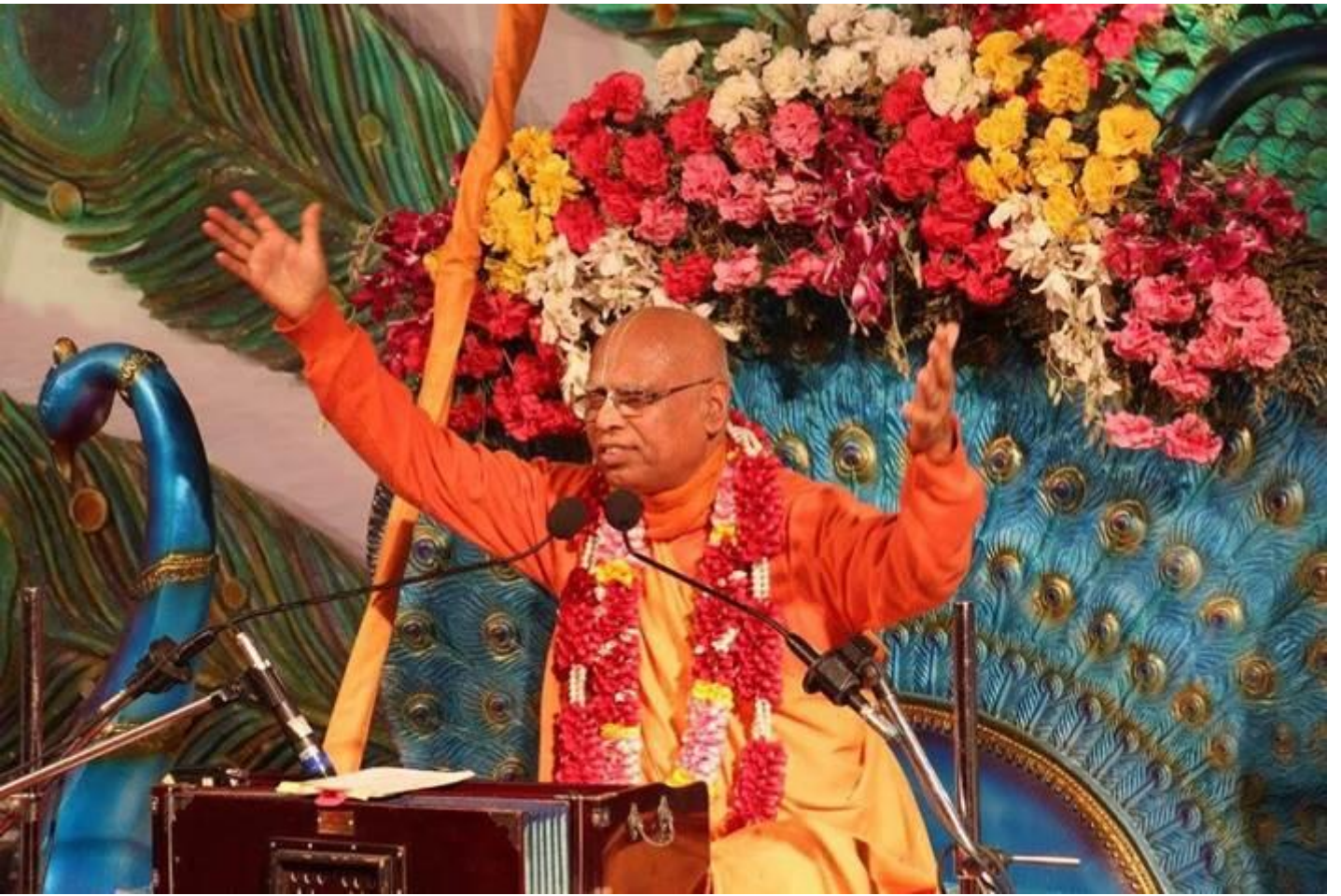
Lord Venkateswara Balaji



Matchless Gifts shop at NVCC



NVCC Pune Temple opening by President of India



Transcendentalists at NVCC Temple

Sri Sri Radha Kunjabihari Temple, Pune Camp

Sri Sri Radha Kunjabihari Temple is in Pune Camp.



ISKCON Pune Camp Temple



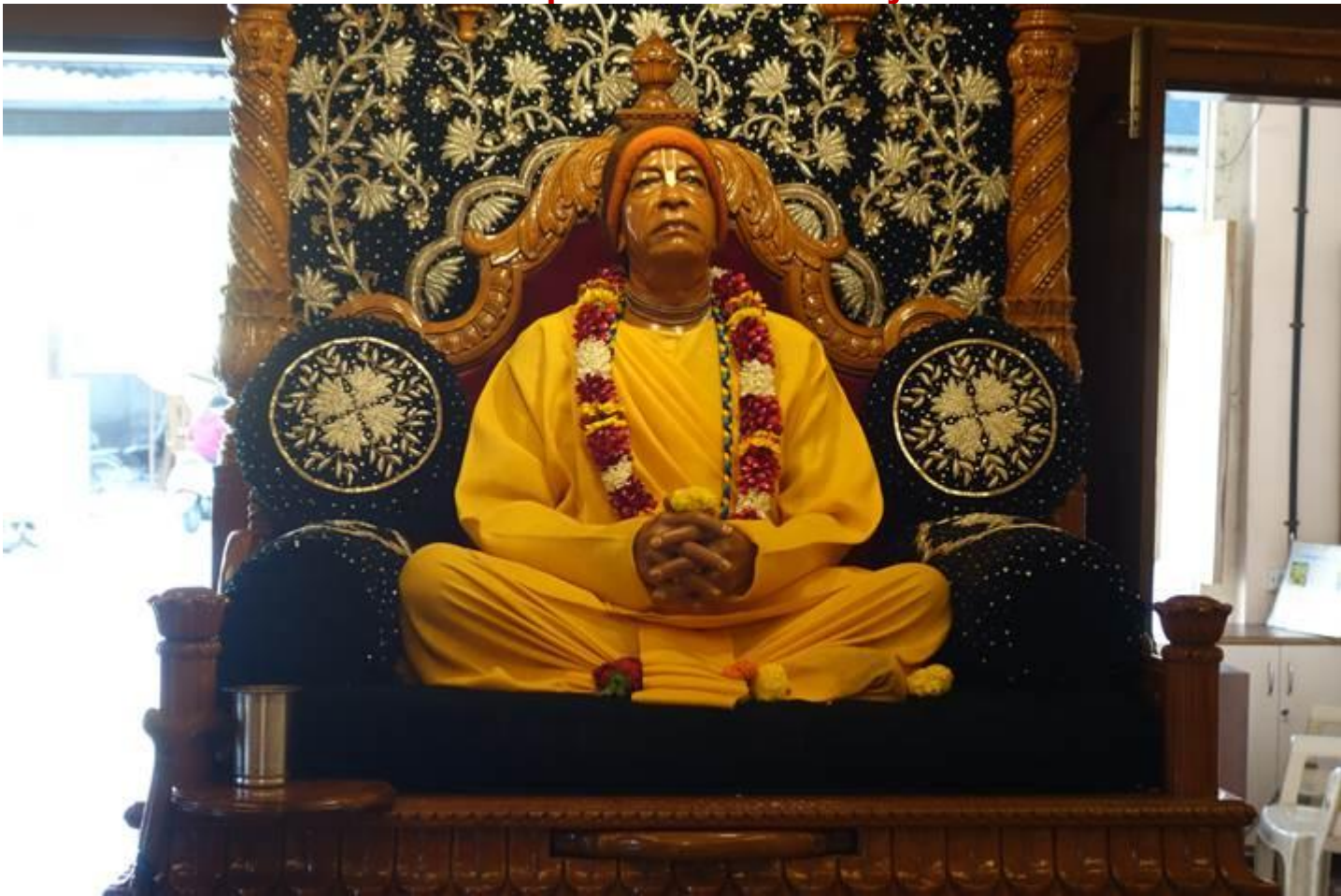
Their Lordships Sri Sri Gaura Nitai and Sri Sri Radha Kunjabihari



Sri Sri Gaura Nitai



Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Kunjabihari



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Beautiful gardens at ISKCON Pune Camp Temple



“Jiva Daya” Book Distribution Department at ISKCON Pune Temple



Govinda's restaurant at ISKCON Pune Camp Temple

Directions to reach Dehu:

Dehu is 1 hour drive from Pune. Local bus and auto rickshaw are available from Pune to go to Dehu. From Pune railway station there is hourly Pune-Lonavala local train. This train has Dehu Road station stop. One can get down at this station and catch an auto-rickshaw to Dehu Gaon which will take approx. 20 mins.

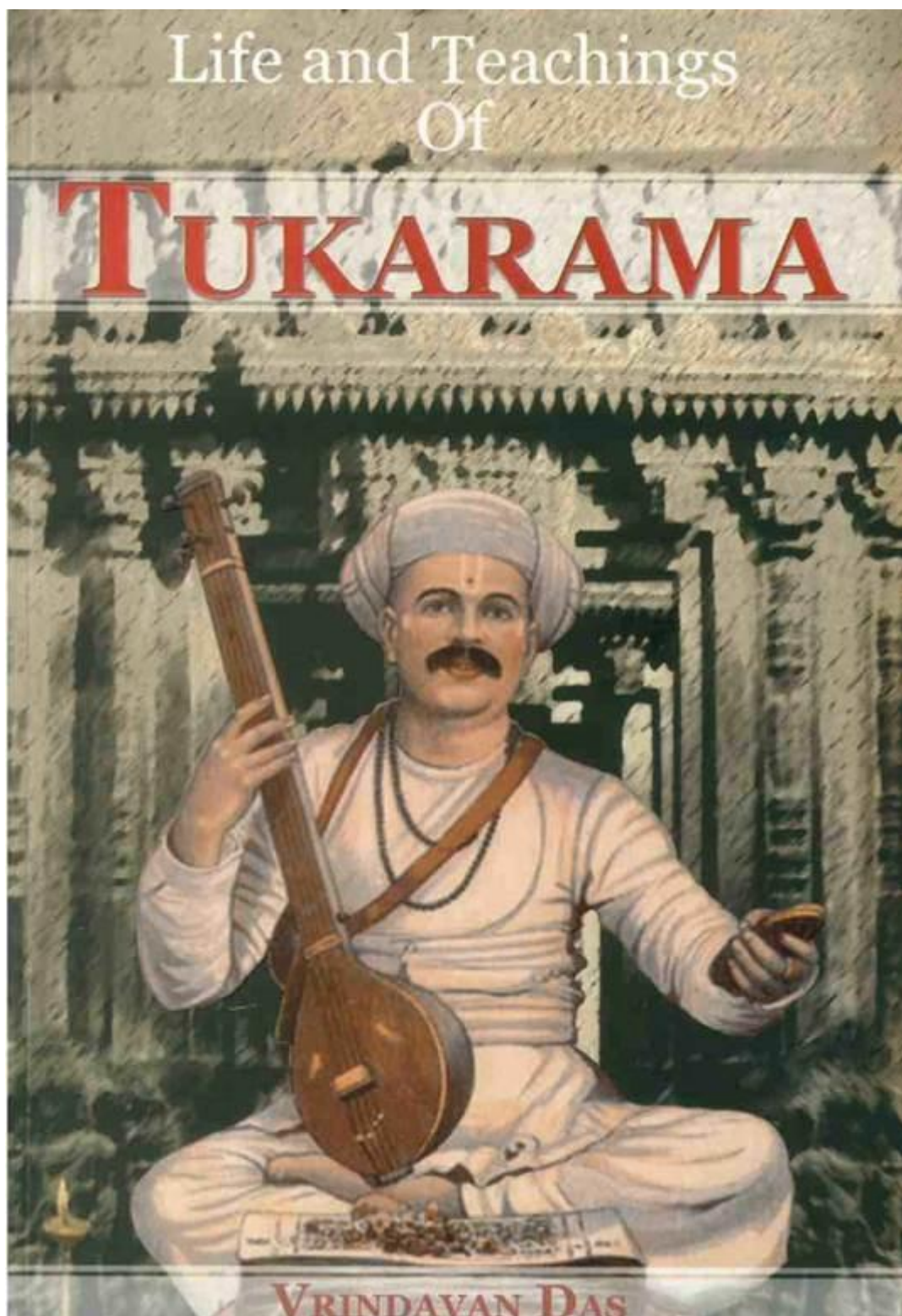


Dehu Road Railway station

Tukarama Saint of Pandharpur by His Holiness Lokanath Swami:

<http://www.backtogodhead.in/tukarama-saint-of-pandharpur-by-lokanath-swami>

Life and Teachings of Tukarama book by Vrindavan Das:



ISKCON Pune: <http://www.iskconpune.com/>

A Day at NVCC Pune: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMFwSIB6eQI>

Mayapur TV: <http://Mayapur.tv> / **Vrindavana TV:** <http://Vrindavana.tv>

Holy Pilgrimages: www.Holy-Pilgrimages.com / **Facebook:**
www.facebook.com/HolyPilgrimages

Holy Dham: www.HolyDham.com

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